DRAFT

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
NORFOLK SOUTHERN PORT PERRY BRIDGE RELOCATION
ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

The Pittsburgh District, Unites States Army Corps of Engineers (District), is participating in the relocation of the Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NS) Port Perry Bridge as a consequence of a required pool raise associated with the District's Locks and Dams 2, 3 and 4, Monongahela River Project (Lower Mon Project). The need for the relocation was previously identified in the District's *Lower Monongahela River Navigation System Feasibility Study, Main Report and Environmental Impact Statement* dated December 1991 (FEIS). However, relocation alternatives were only recently identified and evaluated in an environmental assessment prepared as a supplement to the FEIS to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The United States Coast Guard (USCG) permits bridge crossings over navigable waters and is participating with the District as a formal Cooperating Agency in the preparation of the NEPA environmental assessment to support the required bridge permit amendment.

The NS Port Perry Bridge is located at Monongahela River mile 11.7, about 0.5 miles upstream of Braddock Locks and Dam (formerly "Locks and Dam 2"). The new Braddock Dam replaced Dam 2 in 2004, and is designed to maintain a navigation pool at elevation 723.7 feet National Geodetic Vertical Datum, five feet higher than the pool maintained by the former Dam 2. At elevation 723.7, the navigation clearance beneath the Port Perry Bridge will be reduced to less than the minimum standard for the Monongahela River (42.5') as regulated by the USCG.

To meet the goal of sustaining both river and rail transportation, the District and NS undertook independent studies of alternatives to relocate the bridge. Various engineering solutions were considered, including betterments, to confer on a mutually agreeable plan. The bridge originally accommodated two tracks on parallel bays, but now operates as an alternating one-way, one-track bridge due in part to rail clearance constraints of the tunnel at the bridge's east approach. Alternatives that considered raising the bridge span and tracks in place over the navigation channel also had to consider the clearance constraint of the tunnel. As a result, five alternatives were considered involving modifications to the railroad tunnel:

1) Enlarging the tunnel under traffic, i.e. railroad traffic continues during construction,
2) Daylighting the tunnel (opening the hillside over the tunnel creating a "valley") while diverting traffic via a temporary "Shoo-fly" (a temporary bypass around the tunnel and hillside),
3) Enlarging the tunnel while diverting traffic via a temporary Shoo-fly,
4) Abandoning the tunnel and constructing a permanent Shoo-fly, and
5) Replacing the tunnel with a new adjacent tunnel to the immediate south.

Shoo-fly construction and tunnel modifications would entail significant excavation and disposal requirements.

Further investigations considered other alternatives that did not involve traffic diversions or tunnel modifications, i.e. raising the elevation of the bridge's North or South bay while the other bay carries railroad traffic during construction. These involve replacement of one bay of independent girder spans with new steel plate girder spans and encasement and repairs to bridge piers. Constraints affecting all of these alternatives include maintaining the high volume of rail traffic, maintaining track clearances through the east approach tunnel, minimizing effects on river navigation, avoiding effects to the Edgar Thompson steel plant and local communities, minimizing effects to the CSX and Union Railroad rails and traffic, and minimizing environmental effects. The No Action alternative is to leave the bridge in place unaltered. This alternative would not fulfill the goal of maintaining minimum navigation clearances, and could potentially require abandonment and removal of the Port Perry Bridge.

The preferred alternative is to rehabilitate the bridge piers and raise the South bay while traffic continues on the North Bay, with no diversion of tracks or tunnel modifications. Small amounts of excavated materials associated with track relocations will be disposed at a properly permitted, commercially available disposal site. In-river work required for certain bridge piers will be confined within steel sheet pile encasements founded on caissons or driven around the piers. There will be no fill or discharges subject to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The in-river work is covered under Nationwide Permit #3, Maintenance, and Pennsylvania General Permit 11, which both include state water quality certification. Excavation requirements are minimal, and the bridge steel being replaced will be removed offsite and recycled as scrap. Best management practices will be employed to avoid or minimize environmental impacts from surface runoff, instream work, and air quality. All access and temporary work areas to be acquired will use existing routes and previously disturbed areas. As a consequence of the lack of significant impacts to terrestrial and aquatic resources and to air quality, no project mitigation features are necessary.

No archaeological properties were identified in the project area. The bridge and associated tunnel are historically significant and have been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Effects to the historic integrity of the bridge structure due to replacement or alteration of structural elements will be accounted for through consultation with the Pennsylvania Bureau for Historic Preservation and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation under the terms of a Programmatic Agreement for the Locks and Dams 2, 3 and 4 Monongahela River Project. Any mitigation stipulated as treatment for adverse effects will be implemented at the appropriate time.

The environmental assessment fully considered socio-economic issues and effects on navigation. No residential or business relocations are required, no environmental justice impacts (disproportionate impacts to minority/low income populations) were identified, and no significant impacts to navigation-related concerns are associated with the preferred alternative.

The draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Environmental Assessment will be sent to interested agencies, organizations, local libraries and the

general public on the Lower Mon Project mailing list for a 30-day review period. A copy of the draft FONSI will be published on the District website with a notice that a review copy of the EA may be obtained upon request.

A final District decision on the selection of a preferred alternative will not be made until the District carefully evaluates all comments received through the public review process. Based on the assessment, our preliminary determination is that the proposed project would not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment because, in accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 1508.13, the project will not adversely affect wildlife, fish, wetlands, riparian habitat, streams, or any communities or public roads. Consequently, the preparation of an environmental impact statement under NEPA is not anticipated. The preferred alternative presented in the Environmental Assessment is in compliance with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws, appropriate to this level of planning.